



W Imię Boga, Miłosiernego, Litościwego

*The Islamic Ruling on Music and Singing*

*by Abu Bilaal Mustafa al-Kanadi*

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**PREFACE**

All praise is due to Almighty God, Allah. We praise Him and seek His help and forgiveness. And we seek refuge in Allah from the evil of our own selves and from our wicked deeds. Whosoever has been guided by Allah, there is none to misguide him. And whosoever has been misguided by Allah, none can guide him. I bear witness that there is no other god except Allah, alone, without partner or associate. And I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and messenger. May Allah, the Exalted, bestow His peace and blessings on Prophet Muhammad, upon his good and pure family, as well as upon all of the noble companions and upon those who follow them in righteousness until the Day of Reckoning.

Verily, the most truthful speech is the Book of Allah, and the best guidance is the guidance of Muhammad (Allah's blessings and peace be upon him); while the worst affairs are novelties, for every novelty is a blameworthy innovation. Every innovation (in matters of religion) is misguidance and every misguidance is in the Fire.

The legality of music and singing in the Islamic shari'ah (the divinely-revealed law) is an issue which is hotly debated among individuals and scholars in Islamic societies of our present day. Arriving at the correct view requires unbiased, scholarly research of the available literature which must be supported by authentic, decisive proof.

A considerable amount has been said and written both for and against this subject, and the proliferation of doubt and confusion necessitates another more critical, meticulous analysis and assessment of this whole matter, in order for one to come to a clear, decisive conclusion which leaves not the least bit of doubt in the mind of the reader.

In hope of achieving such a difficult and lofty goal, I have applied a distinctive method which I trust, by Allah's leave, will succeed in achieving these treasured aims and objectives.

Firstly, I analyzed and assessed the claims made by differing factions that certain Quraanic verses support or prohibit the legality of the issue at hand. Secondly, I stringently researched the area of pertinent hadeeth literature in order to shed light on the issue as well as to dispel a number of misconceptions about the authenticity of certain traditions. Thirdly, I presented a consensus of the Islamic scholars with special reference to the pious predecessors of the Islamic ummah; i.e. the noble companions, the taabi'een, the famous imams and other jurisprudents (fuqahaa). Fourthly, I attempted to explain the infinite wisdom which underlies the ruling of prohibition as ordained by the divinely-revealed shari'ah. Fifthly, I cited examples of exceptions to the general rule of prohibition, as either defined by the authentic sunnah or agreed upon by the scholars. Finally, I presented a synopsis of the shar'iah texts and a conclusion which clarifies the prohibited aspects of music, singing and their adjuncts.

I pray that Allah grants success in this endeavor, accepting it as a work done purely for His sake and bestowing upon us and our brethren in faith, sincerity and guidance to His straight path.

Abu Bilal Mustafa Al-Kanadi  
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### ***ANALYSIS OF QURAANIC TEXTS AND COMMENTARIES***

It is vital that one critically assesses the extent to which certain verses of the Quraan allegedly stand as proof for or against the legality of music and singing. Some of those verses which might be misconstrued to indicate that music, singing, dancing etc are permissible, are mentioned first. They are then followed with a sample of verses, which certain scholars have claimed to be proof of prohibition regarding this issue.

#### **VERSES CLAIMED TO INDICATE THE LEGALITY OF MUSIC**

The following verses regarding the Psalms of Dawood (upon whom be peace) is case in point.

#### **THE FIRST VERSE:**

**{And verily, We did favor some of the prophets over others, and to Dawood We gave the Psalms.}(\*1)**

How does this verse purport to be proof for those who claim legality? It is a common misconception of certain Muslims-especially those having a western background or living in the west-that Dawood (peace be upon him) composed the Psalms and sang them to the accompaniment of music.(\*2) There are even some commentators of English translations of the Quraan who fall prey to the same error. For example, Abdullah Yusuf Ali comments on this verse saying, "The spiritual gifts with which the Prophets came, may themselves, take different forms according to the needs of the world and the times in which they lived, as judged by the wisdom of God. A striking example here given is the gift of song and music as given to David...(\*3) The fact is that the Psalms were not

composed by Prophet Dawood (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings), but rather were revealed to him(\*4) by Allah, the exalted, as is clearly stated in the Quraan.(\*5) Additionally, nowhere in the Quraan or in the authentic traditions(\*6) is there any support for this accompanying the psalms with musical instruments .

In order to properly understand the true nature of the Psalms (Az-Zaboor), one must look to some of the dependable Quraanic commentaries (tafaseer). Ibn Katheer (Allah's mercy be upon him), explains the meaning of the term Az-Zaboor saying, "Az-Zaboor is the name of the book revealed by Allah to Dawood (peace be upon him)."( \*7) Al-Aloosi further confirms this saying, "Az-Zaboor is the name of the book sent down to Dawood (upon whom be peace); it was revealed to him gradually, by installments."(\*8)

As to the nature of these psalms, Al-Qurtubi states, "Az-Zaboor is the book of Dawood, consisting of one hundred and fifty chapters; however, it contained no rulings of divine law on matters of prohibited or allowed things. Rather, it consisted of words of wisdom and admonishment."(\*9) Al-Aaloosi adds to this description that "the Zaboor also contained divine praises and glorification of Allah, (exalted be His praise)."( \*10)

Prophet Dawood's captivating, melodious voice was exceedingly beautiful and effective. When he recited the Zaboor, men, jinn, birds and wild animals gathered around him.(\*11)

#### THE SECOND VERSE:

Some ignorant people claim that the following text regarding Prophet Ayyoob(Job), whom Allah tested with various trials and tribulations, permits music and dancing:

**{Allah, the Exalted and Mighty, commands His messenger, Muhammad in the Quraan, "And recall Our servant, Ayyoob, when he cried unto his Lord, 'Verily, Satan has afflicted me with distress and suffering.' It was said unto him, 'Strike the ground with your foot; here is a spring for a cool bath and water to drink.'}(\*12)**

In these verses Allah, the Glorious and Exalted, directs His Prophet, Ayyoob, to strike his foot upon the ground, whereupon a spring came forth. He bathed in its cool, soothing water which healed the disease afflicting the outer surface of his body. He also drank from the spring which removed the illness that afflicted his innermost body. Thus, after putting His faithful servant, Ayyoob, to excruciating tests and trials, Allah Ta'aala judges him to be firm, patient and unwavering in his faith, saying: **{Truly, We found him firm in patience and constancy; how excellent a slave. Verily, he was ever turning in repentance (to his Lord).}(\*13)**

Regarding this verse, Al-Qurtubi mentions in his tafseer that certain ignorant ascetics and common Sufis have sought proof for the permissibility of dancing in Allah's saying to Ayyoob, **{Strike the ground with your foot.}(\*14)** He relates the reply of some scholars to such baseless claims. Abul-Faraj Ibnul-Jowzi says, "This is an empty argument. Had there been a command for the striking of the foot as an act of joy, there might be some slight excuse for such a view; however, the fact is that the command for striking the ground with the

foot was in order to get the spring water to flow from it"(\*15) Ibn Aqeel gives a further rebuttal by questioning, "How is the proof of the legality of dancing deduced from the simple fact that an afflicted person is ordered as a means of miraculous healing to strike the earth with his foot in order to cause water to spring forth?"(\*16) He further suggests that if such reasoning were correct, "It would also be right to interpret Allah's saying to Moosa, **{Strike the stone with your staff.}**"(\*17) as a proof for the legality of striking [rhythmically] upon [stuffed] cushions with sticks!(\*18) We seek refuge in Allah from such fraudulent playing with the Shari'ah."(\*19)

Obviously, one could make endless far-fetched analogies between certain verses of the Quraan and various, false, preconceived notions which one might hope to substantiate. May Allah protect us from such evil manipulation of the divinely-revealed law.

It is essential at this point to mention that if it were established - for the sake of argument - that Dawood (peace be upon him) did in fact have musical accompaniment to his psalms; such a thing would not be proof that music, singing to musical accompaniment, etc. are followed in Islam. This is substantiated by the agreed upon principle from the science of usoolul fiqh(\*20) which states that the revealed law (shar'un) of those who came before us(\*21) is considered applicable insofar as such law is not explicitly abrogated by the texts of the final divine;y-revealed law of Islam as embodied in the Quraan and the authentic sunnah.(\*22) However, as will be presented later, there is abundant authentic proof from the Islamic Shari'ah which prohibits music. Therefore, this prohibition by the Islamic Shari'ah abrogates all previously-revealed law and nullifies any support it may have made for the legality of music. With this in mind, it becomes abundantly clear that the attempts of certain persons to use such previously-mentioned verses as proof for the permissibility of music are baseless and untenable .

### ***QURAANIC VERSES ALLEGED TO INDICATE PROHIBITION OF MUSIC***

In his tafseer, Imam Al-Qurtubi mentions that there are three verses which have been used by the ulaama as proof of the contempt for and the prohibition of singing.

#### **THE FIRST VERSE:**

The first of these verses appears in Soorah An-Najm(\*23) as follows:

Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, addresses the disbelievers from the tribe of Quraysh, **{Do you marvel at this statement, and laugh and do not weep, while you amuse yourselves [proudly] in vanities? Rather, prostrate before Allah and worship Him.}**

The important phrase is Allah's saying, **{Wa antum saamidoon}** ("**while you amuse yourselves [proudly] in vanities**"). Due to the root 'samada' having various interpretations in the Arabic language, the scholars differ about this phrase's meaning. As a result, different interpretations are given by the commentators of the Quraan, such as the companions, taabi'een and later scholars of tafseer.

Al-Qurtubi refers to the various derived meanings mentioned by the linguists (\*24). Among the meanings understood from the root 'samada' is the raising of

one's head up proudly or in disdain. When conjugated, the noun form 'sumood' means leisure or idle play, while 'saamid' (the doer of the action) means one who plays idly with musical instruments or other objects of play. It is said to the singing girl, "Asmideena!" ("Amuse us with your singing!") However, 'saamid' can also designate one who lifts his head in pride and haughtiness, as mentioned in the ancient dictionary, As-Sihah.(\*25) A further meaning derived from the root 'samada' is the notion of standing motionless or idle. This was mentioned by Al-Mathdawi,(\*26) one of the famous grammarians, but he added that the common, established meaning in the language points to the idea of turning away by making fun and amusement. Finally, Al-Mubarrid mentions the meaning of 'saamidoon' saying, "Saamidoon means khaamidoon [silent, motionless]."( \*27)

At-Tabari mentions in detail the various narrations traced to the sahaabah and taabi'een. (\*28) According to Ibn Abbaas, the word 'saamidoon' in this verse refers to the mushrikeen's habit of singing and playing noisily whenever they heard the Quraan being recited, in order to drown out the reciter's voice so that others wouldn't hear it. (\*29) This meaning is used by the people of Yemen. Ibn Abbas also indicated a second, more general meaning for the word 'saamidoon'; namely, that they were playing and amusing themselves and making light of the affair. The same opinion was held by some taabi'een such as Ikrimah and Ad-Dahhaak. A third meaning given by Ibn Abbaas is that they held their heads up in pride. Other tabi'een have indicated certain meanings similar to the preceding linguists' views. Thus, Qataadah reports Al-Hasan as saying that 'samidoon' is the mushrikeen's being inattentive and negligent. Mujaahid says it indicates their being in a state of extreme anger or rage.

Clearly, the term 'saamidoon' has various possible meanings, e.g. that those referred to were singing noisily and amusing themselves with music and idle play, that they were holding their heads in pride, or that they were exhibiting extreme anger and hatred for what they heard of the Quraan and the message of Islam. Furthermore, it could indicate that they were indifferent, negligent and rejectionist in their attitude. All of these meanings are possible, and are not - in essence - contradictory. Most likely, 'saamidoon' is a comprehensive description of their different reactions upon hearing the verses of the Quraan and the new message of tawheed. However, it must be said that when a Quranic term yields a number of different possible meanings and we have no clear, authentically-reported statement from the Prophet defining it in a strict sense, then such a verse containing the said term cannot be used as an unequivocal, decisive proof (daleelun qat'ee) of any particular meaning. Thus, this verse cannot stand alone as an uncontested proof of the prohibition of singing, music, etc. Rather, other evidence, either from the Quraan itself or from the authentic sunnah, must prove such a position. (\*30)

#### THE SECOND VERSE:

Another verse alleged to be proof of the illegality of music, singing, etc is mentioned in Soorah Al-Israa as follows:

After Iblees (Satan) refuses to bow before Adam as ordered, he requests that Allah grant him respite until the Day of Resurrection, so that he may misguide all but a few of the descendants of Adam (peace be upon him). Allah, the Glorious and Exalted, addresses Satan thus, **{And excite any of them whom**

**you can with your voice. Assault them with your cavalry and infantry, be a partner with them in their wealth and children, and make them promotes. But Satan promises them nothing except deceit.}(\*31)**

It is related that some of the commentators from the generation of the taabi'een, such as Mujahid and Dahhaak,(\*32) interpreted Satan's exciting mankind with his voice to mean through the use of music, song and amusement. Ad-Dahaak said it was the sound of wind instruments. However, according to Ibn Abbaas, the voice mentioned in the verse refers to every form of invitation which calls to disobedience to Allah, the Exalted.(\*33) After mentioning the various interpretations of the commentators, At-Tabari says, "The most correct of these views expresses that verily, Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, said to Iblees, **{Excite whosoever of Adam's progeny you can with your voice,}** and He did not specify any particular type of voice. Thus, every voice which is not an invitation to Allah's worship and to His obedience is included in the meaning of Satan's 'voice' which is referred to in the Quraanic verse."(\*34)

In conclusion, this verse - like the preceding one - is too general in its meaning, and is not by itself an explicit and unequivocal proof of the prohibition of music and singing, except in the case that such singing and music invites or leads to disobedience to Allah. Therefore, one must look at other unambiguous texts, which clearly show music, singing, etc. to be prohibited intrinsically and not due to some extraneous variable.

#### THE THIRD VERSE:

The final verse, and the one most often presented as proof of prohibition, is located in Soorah Luqmaan:(\*35)

Allah, the Exalted, says, **{And there are among men those who purchase idle talk in order to mislead others from Allah's path without knowledge, and who throw ridicule upon it. For such there will be a humiliating punishment.}**

After mentioning the condition of the felicitous (those who are guided by Allah's Book and who benefit from listening to it), Allah, the Glorious and Exalted, reveals the condition of the miserable ones who refuse to benefit from hearing the word of God. They only devote themselves avidly to idle and foul talk, empty amusements and all other false works and deeds whose purposes are to turn others away from Allah's path and to make it the butt of mockery.

Ibn Jareer At-Tabari, in his Jaamiul Bayaan, mentions that the interpreters of the Quraan differed as to the meaning of the term **{lahwal hadeeth} (idle talk)** which occurs in the above-quoted verse. Their views regarding its meaning can be formulated into three basic categories.

The first category defines the term **{lahwal hadeeth}**: (a) singing and listening to songs, (b) the purchasing of professional male or female singers and (c) the purchase of instruments of amusement; namely, the drum (tabl). The elements of this category revolve around reference to the blameworthy usage of instruments of idle amusement, in short, music and song. This view was held by a number of companions such as Ibn Masood, Jaabir and Ibn Abbaas. It is related that the former was questioned regarding the meaning of

the verse under discussion to which he replied, "I swear by the One other than Whom there is no god that it refers to singing [ghinaa]"; he repeated it three times to emphasize his position.(\*36) It is related that Ibn Abbaas said it referred to "singing and the like."(\*37) Jaabir is reported to view its meaning to signify singing and listening to songs.(\*38) This general view pointing to censure of music and song was also held by a great number of taabi'een, such as Ikrimah, Mujaahid, Makhool and Umar bin Shuayb, to name only a few.(\*39)

The second category of interpretation centers around the idea that **{lahwal hadeeth}** indicates conversation inviting to or consisting of shirk (polytheism). This view was the view of some tafseer scholars from the generation after the companions, such as Ad-Dahaak and Abdur-Rahmaan bin Zayd bin Aslam.(\*40)

The third category conveys the meaning of all false talk, actions or deeds, whose nature it is to divert people from Allah's path and from His worship and remembrance. For example, Al-Aaloosi relates that Al-Hasan Al-Basri was reported as saying that **{lahwal hadeeth}** includes "everything which distracts one from worship and the remembrance of Allah such as whiling the night away in idle conversation or entertainment, jokes, superstitious tales, songs and the likes thereof."(\*41) Al-Aaloosi supports this view, saying that the verse should be interpreted to include all such blameworthy words and deeds which divert one from Allah's path.

After having conveyed the previously-mentioned categories of tafseer, Ibn Jareer relates the commentary of Ibn Zayd about the verse, **{And there are among men those who purchase idle talk in order to mislead others from Allah's path without knowledge, and who throw ridicule upon it.}** Ibn Zayd said, "The people referred to [in this verse] are the disbelievers. Don't you see that it says [in the immediately following verse], **{And when Our revelations are recited to such a person he turns away in pride as if he hadn't heard them, as if there was a deafness in his ears.}**"(\*42) The people of Islam are not as those described here, although some say the verse refers to Muslims [as well]. The verse refers to the disbelievers who pitched their voices in a tumultuous clatter in order to drown out the hearing of the Quraan."(\*43)

At-Tabari concludes by offering his own weighted preference for the general, inclusive meaning as conveyed in this final category. He states, "The most correct view regarding the meaning of **{lahwal hadeeth}** is the one which indicates every form of conversation(\*44) which diverts from Allah's path - the hearing of which has been prohibited by Allah or His Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him). This is because the statement by Allah, the Exalted, is general and inclusive, and does not exclude certain forms of conversation. Therefore, His statement remains in its general context unless proof which specifies it appears; and singing and polytheism [shirk] are included in this general statement."(\*45)

From what has preceded, it is to be understood that a specific or exclusive meaning such as singing or shirk cannot be proven; rather, the verse and particularly the phrase **{lahwal hadeeth}** should be interpreted as anything which diverts one from Allah's path. Music, singing, etc. (since they occupy people's attention and distract them from Allah's worship and remembrance and invite to His disobedience), no doubt fall under the general censure, blame

and rebuke cast upon those who fall into this category. However, this verse is not itself an explicit, unequivocal proof for the prohibition of music, singing, etc. Rather, its prohibition is conditional and incidental as stated above. Thus, this issue requires other external proofs which are both clear and categorical, so as not to leave the least bit of doubt in the mind of the conscientious, truth-seeking believer. In order to achieve such a lofty, yet absolutely vital objective, it is necessary to turn to the second source of the Islamic shari'ah, the authentic sunnah of Allah's Messenger (upon whom be blessings and peace).

### ***CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE HADEETH LITERATURE***

A meticulous, critical analysis of the relevant texts from the hadeeth literature reveals that, contrary to the commonly-held belief, there are a number of authentic narrations from the prophetic sunnah which clearly point to the indisputable fact that music, instruments, singing to accompaniment, etc. are objects prohibited by the Islamic Shar'iah. The exceptions to this general rule are specific, limited types of innocent singing or chanting without any instrumental accompaniment or to the accompaniment of the simple hand drum (daff) on certain occasions designated by the sunnah. Their details require discussion later.

Unfortunately, due to certain modern scholars' blind imitation (taqleed) of a few earlier scholars, many Muslims entertain the misconception that all the hadeeths relating to music, singing, musical instruments, etc. are either weak (da'eef) or forged (mowdoo'). A critical analysis of the available hadeeth literature clearly reveals that this is an untenable position. In order to substantiate this claim and to dispel such false notions, it is necessary to quote a number of authentic traditions along with the translation of their meanings.

### ***THE TRADITIONS AND THEIR DEGREE OF AUTHENTICITY***

#### ***THE NARRATION OF AL-BUKHAARI:***

The translation of the hadeeth follows: The Prophet (Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said, "There will be [at some future time] people from my Ummah [community of Muslims] who will seek to make lawful: fornication, the wearing of silk,(\*46) wine-drinking and the use of musical instruments [ma'aazif]. Some people will stay at the side of the mountain and when their shepherd comes in the evening to ask them for his needs, they will say, 'Return to us tomorrow.' Then Allah will destroy them during the night by causing the mountain to fall upon them, while He changes others into apes and swine. They will remain in such a state until the Day of Resurrection."(\*47)

#### ***A CRITICAL DISCUSSION OF ITS ISNAAD:(\*48)***

Prior to a discussion of the meaning of the part of this hadeeth relevant to this treatise, it is necessary to refute certain unfounded criticisms of its authenticity directed at it by a few scholars of the past and present, struggling under unfortunate misconceptions.

At the beginning of the isnaad, Imam Al-Bukhaari related, "Qaala Hishaamu-bnu Ammaar..."("Hishaam bin Ammaar said...") This statement was misconstrued by Ibn Hazm to indicate that there is a missing link between Al-Bukhaari and the next narrator (i.e Hishaam),(\*49) implying that the hadeeth's isnaad is disconnected (munqati') and therefore not valid as proof in the



prohibition of music, song, musical instruments, etc. This type of isnaad, termed mu'allaq, contains a missing link. However, Al-Bukhaari's hadeeth is authentic, because there exist fully-connected chains for it which fulfill the condition of authenticity. This was stated by the great critical scholar of hadeeth, Shaykh Ibnus-Salaah, in his celebrated work, Uloomul Hadeeeth (his treatise on the science or methodology of hadeeth criticism and assessment). In his commentary of Saheehul Bukhaari, entitled Fat-hul Baari, Ibn Hajar mentioned Ibnus Salaah's meticulous refutation of Ibn Hazm's statement.(\*50)

Among the other great critical scholars of hadeeth who mentioned that the isnaad is soundly connected (mowsool) is Ibn Hajar's shaykh, Al-Haafidh Al-Iraqi. He stated that the isnaad is found connected in Al-Ismaa'eeli's work, entitled Al-Mustakhraj, which collects together other chains of narrators (or similar ones) for the same hadeeths mentioned in Al-Bukhaari's collection.

And finally, there is Ibn Hajar's distinctive work, Taghleequt Ta'leeq, a rare and stupendous masterpiece, which brings together connected, authentic chains (asaneed) of transmitters for those traditions which appear in Al-Bukhaari's compilation in the form of the disconnected (mu'alliq) type of hadeeth, thereby dispelling accrued misconceptions regarding the claim of "weak" hadeeths occurring in the text (matn) of Al-Jaamis As-Saheeh.(\*51)

After quoting other complete, authentic chains(\*52) for the tradition under study, along with the sources wherein such chains of transmitters are mentioned,(\*53) Ibn Hajar concludes by emphasizing (in reference to Al-Bukhaari's narration):

"This is an authentic hadeeth. It has no deficiency or defect, and there is no point of weakness for any attack to be made on it. Abu Muhammed Ibn Hazam labeled it as defective by virtue of his claim that there is a break [intiqaa'] in the chain between Al-Bukhaari and Sadaqah bin Khaalid and because of the difference of opinion regarding the name of Abu Maalik(\*54) As you've seen, I have quoted nine fully-connected chains of transmission (asaneed) whose narrators are thoroughly dependable. As for the difference regarding the kunyah of the companions, they are all of impeccable repute. Further more, in Ibn Hibbaan's narration, the transmitter stated that he heard from both of them...(\*55) I have in my possession yet other chains which could be presented here, however, I would not like to prolong this subject further by mentioning them. In what we have stated there is enough proof for the sensible, thinking person. And Allah is the grantor of success."(\*56)

In short, this particular narration of Al-Bukhaari is authentic and consequently constitutes a valid and binding text to be referred to in determining the ruling (hukm) regarding music.

It should be mentioned that certain modern-day writers, who blindly imitate previous scholars by quoting their views without applying the critical sciences of hadeeth research, have merely parroted the position of Ibn Hazm, and due to this, have caused many unwary persons to go astray regarding this issue. For example, Yoosuf Al-Qardaawi, in his popular book, entitled Al-Halaal wal Haraam fil Islam,(\*57) says in regard to the extant hadeths on music: "As for what has been mentioned by way of prophetic traditions [relating to the subject of music], all of these have been assessed to have some point or another of weakness according to the fuqahaa of hadeeth and its scholars.(\*58) The Qaadi

Abu Bakr Ibnul-Arabi said, 'There is no authentic hadeeth prohibiting singing.' And Ibn Hazm said, 'Every hadeeth related [prohibiting music and singing] is false and forged.'(\*59)

Unfortunately, the statement that "all" the narrations are weak according to "scholars of hadeeth" is a gross error on Al-Qardaawi's part and is not the result of meticulous critical research. Rather, it is due to an uncritical, blind acceptance of the words of Ibn Hazm and Ibnul-Arabi. Ibn Hazm was no doubt a virtuous, sharp-minded scholar; however, in the area of hadeeth assessment and verification (as is the case in many aspects of his school of Dhaahiri fiqh), he has certain untenable and unfounded, even some very abnormal views. (\*60) The accomplished hadeeth scholar and student of Ibn Taymiyyah, Al-Haafidh Ibn Abdul-Haadi, says of Ibn Hazm that "he often errs in his critical assessment of the degrees of traditions and on the conditions of their narrators."(\*61) In fact, there is unanimous consensus among the most reputable critical scholars of hadeeth regarding Ibn Hazm's erroneous assignment of a ruling of d'af (weakness) to Al-Bukhaari's hadeeth. Regarding the degree of this hadeeth, the views of Ibnus-Salaah, Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalaani and Al-Haafidh Al-Iraaqi have already been mentioned. Among the qualified scholars who also agree with his assessment are the great scholars, Ibnul-Qayyim and Ibn Taymiyyah. Ibnul-Arabi is similar to Ibn Hazm in that he is quick to give a ruling of forgery or weakness on a hadeeth, without the necessary, detailed analysis and synthesis of all extant chains of narration relating to the subject. Had he executed such an analysis, undoubtedly he would have arrived at a sound decision and avoided much blame and censure.

Having established the authenticity of the aforementioned narration recorded in Imam Al-Bukhaari's compilation, the meaning of his hadeeth and its stand as an indisputable proof of the unlawfulness of music may now be discussed.

#### **COMMENTARY ON AL-BUKHAARI'S HADEETH:**

The portion of Al-Bukhaari's hadeeth, which is presently of concern, is that segment whose text states:

"There will be a people of my ummah [nation] who will seek to make lawful: fornication, the wearing of silk, wine-drinking and the use of musical instruments..."

The word of consequence here is the Arabic term 'ma'aazif'. In order to discover what it implies, one must turn to Arabic dictionaries of hadeeth terms and other scholarly works. According to Lisaanul Arab,(\*62) ma'aazif is the plural of mi'zaf or 'azf,(\*63) and indicates objects or instruments of play or leisure which are beat upon for their sound. If the singular form is used (mi'zaf), it specifically means a type of large wooden drum used mainly by the people of Yemen. The noun 'azf also stands for the act of playing with ma'aazif, i.e. hand drums (dufoof)(\*64) or other instruments which are struck upon. Al-Jowhari, the author of the ancient dictionary, As-Sihaah, asserts that ma'aazif signifies musical instruments, al-'aazif indicates one who sings, and the 'azf of the wind is its voice.(\*65) In the famous Taaajul 'Aroos min Jawaahiril Qaaamoos, besides quoting the above-mentioned meanings, the commentator Az-Zabeedi says that ma'aazif are instruments of leisure which are drummed upon or played, like the lute ('ood), the drum (tanboor), the small hand drum (daff) or other such musical objects.(\*66) And finally, in the famous dictionary,

An-Nihaayah fee Ghareebil Hadeeth,(\*67) Ibnul-Atheer mentions the meaning of ma'aazif as it is used in various hadeeths. He comments, "By 'azf is meant playing with ma'aazif, consisting of dufoof [hand drums] or other instruments which are beat upon." He also mentions the derived noun form, 'azeef, which means "sound" or voice", while 'azeeful jinn signifies the ringing of the jinns' voices. It is said that the people of the desert imagined the shrill ringing of the winds in the desert air to be the voice of jinns.(\*68)

The commentaries of the scholars of hadeeth also agree on the above-quoted meanings for the term maazif mentioned in Al-Bukhaari's narration. In Ibn Hajar's exhaustive commentary of Saheehul Bukhaari,(\*69) he adds that an earlier hadeeth scholar, named Ad-Dimyati, says that the word 'azf is also used to describe singing (ghinaa).(\*70)

Such a detailed analysis of the meaning of the term ma'aazif, as mentioned in the most authoritative dictionaries of the Arabic language, is necessary to refute any others' possible attempts to "explain away" or "interpret" it in a manner suiting their preconceived notions or opinions. It clearly has been established that the word ma'aazif - according to correct Arabic usage - indicates a specific number of things: (a) musical instruments, (b) the sounds of those musical instruments (music) and (c) singing to instrumental accompaniment.

#### ANALYSIS OF THE TEXT AS A PROOF OF PROHIBITION:

An analysis of the hadeeth's wording clearly indicates the unlawfulness of music. In the text it is said that people from the Prophet's ummah will "seek to make lawful" that which is termed ma'aazif. This statement ("seek to make lawful") is derived from the verb yastahilloona, whose first part, yasta, is the conjugated addition to the root ahalla. The conjugated form ista means to seek, try, attempt, desire, etc., while the root ahalla means to make lawful. Taken together it means "to seek to make lawful". Obviously, one can only seek, desire or attempt to make lawful that which is not lawful. For if something is already lawful, it is nonsensical for one to seek to establish it. Other things which people will attempt to make lawful are named along with ma'aazif. These additional matters are definitely prohibited in Islam - namely, illegal sexual intercourse, the drinking of wine or liquor and the wearing of silk (for males). Had ma'aazif(\*71) not been prohibited, they never would have been associated with other prohibited objects in one and the same context.

In order to dispel the common misconception prevalent among certain Muslims that "only one hadeeth" in Al-Bukhaari's compilation stands as proof of prohibition regarding this issue, it is necessary to mention a sample of other authentic hadeeth. The fact that the majority of traditions regarding music, instruments and singing are weak and rejected (munkar) does not negate the existence of an appreciable number whose degree is saheeh (authentic) or hasan (of good, acceptable quality).

#### **THE NARRATION OF IBN MAAJAH:**

There is a narration by Ibn Maajah in Kitaabul Fitan(\*72) in the chapter on punishments. The translation is:

The messenger of Allah said: "A people of my ummah will drink wine, calling it by other than its real name. Merriment will be made for them through the playing of musical instruments and the singing of lady singers. Allah will cleave the earth under them and turn others into apes and swine."

This is an authentic hadeeth. It was also narrated by Al-Bayhaqi and Ibn Asaakir with the same wording. The renowned scholar of hadeeth and fiqh, Ibnul-Qayyim, authenticated it as mentioned in the famous hadeeth commentary of the 'allaamah, Abut-Teeb Muhammad Shamsul-Haqq Al-Adheem-Aabaadi.(\*73) Furthermore, it was given a degree of saheeh by muhaddith of our era, Shaykh Muhammad Naasiruddeen Al-Albaani. He mentioned its detailed, critical evaluation and assessment in his Silsatul Ahaadeeth As-Saheehah(\*74) and in his Saheehul Jaamis Sagheer(\*75) It is further mentioned and authenticated in his Ghaayatul Maraam, Takhreejul Halaali wal Haraam(\*76)

### ***THE NARRATIONS OF AHMAD BIN HANBAL:***

There are a number of narrations proving the prohibition of music and instruments in Ahmad bin Hanbal's Musnad. Although many of them are weak, two narrations from his compilation, which have been verified to be authentic, follow.

#### **THE FIRST TEXT:**

The translation is:

The Prophet said: "Verily, Allah prohibited wine, gambling and al-koobah; and every intoxicant is prohibited." Sufyan said, "I asked the narrator, Ali bin Badheemah, 'What is al-koobah?' He answered, 'It is the drum.'"

#### **THE SECOND TEXT:**

It is translated thus:

Allah's Messenger said, "Verily, Allah has prohibited for my ummah: wine, gambling, a drink distilled from corn, the drum and the lute;(\*79) while He supplemented me with another prayer, the witr."(\*80)

These narrations have also been related by other compilers, such as Al-Bayhaqi in his Shu'ubul Eemaan with an authentic isnaad and At-Tabaraani in Al-Mu'jam Al-Kabeer with a jayyid (good) isnaad. The detailed proof of their verified authenticity are mentioned in Al-Albaani's Saheehul Jaami's Sagheer(\*81) It is further authenticated in his Mishkaatul Masaabeeh(\*82) and in his work, Al-Ahadeeth As-Saheehah(\*83)

### ***THE NARRATION OF AL-HAAKIM AND OTHERS:***

It is reported by Al-Haakim in his Mustadrak(\*84) that the Prophet (upon whom be peace and blessings) took the hand of the companion, AbdurRahmaan bin 'Owf, and they proceeded to visit the Prophet's ailing son, Ibraheem. They found the infant in the throes of death, so the Prophet took him to his breast and held him until his spirit left him. Then he put the child down and wept, whereupon Abdur-Rahmaan asked in astonishment, "You are

weeping, Oh Messenger of Allah, while you prohibit crying!?" The following is the Prophet's reply:

"Verily, I did not prohibit weeping [per se] but rather, I forbade two voices [sowtayn] which are imbecilic [ahmaq] and sinfully shameless [faajir]: one, a voice [singing] to the accompaniment of musical amusement [lahw] and Satan's [wind] instruments; the other, a voice [wailing] due to some calamity, accompanied by striking of the face and tearing of garments. But this [weeping of mine] stems from compassion, and whosoever does not show compassion will not receive it."

This hadeeth's degree is hasan,(\*85) and it has been strengthened by another narration related by Abu Bakr Ash-Shaafi'ee in his work, Ar-Rubaa'eeyat.(\*86) Its abbreviated text follows.

### ***THE NARRATION OF ABU BAKR ASH-SHAAFI'EE:***

Anas bin Maalik related from the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) that "two cursed sounds are that of the [wind] instrument [mizmaar] (\*87) played on the occasion of joy and grace, and woeful wailing upon the occurrence of adversity."(\*88)

A similar text with slightly different wording is related by Al-Bazzaar in his collection(\*89) of hadeeths. Al-Haafidh Nooruddeen Al-Haythami mentioned it in his Majma' Az-Zawaaid(\*90) and indicated that the narrators of this isnaad are all dependable. Thus, these last three narrations prove the illegality of music and singing to musical accompaniment, especially wind instruments (mazaameer), which are referred to as "flutes of Satan" in the tradition related by Al-Haakim.

The traditions quoted are not the only available authentic hadeeths which establish prohibition. There are others(\*91), however the scope of this treatise does not allow a more detailed exposition. The sample mentioned is sufficient proof, for **{verily, therein is a reminder for any who has a heart or who gives ear and earnestly witnesses [the truth].}**(\*92)

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### Footnotes

(\*1)Soorah Al-Israa, 17:55.

(\*2)The common misconception is that he sang to the accompaniment of harp. The origin of this is in Judeo-Christian sources which have suffered the effects of alteration and distortion; therefore, they cannot be depended upon.

(\*3)The Holy Quran: text,translation and commentary, vol. 1, p.709, footnote no. 2241.

(\*4)It must be noted that the "psalms" which are presently extant in the Old testament versions are erroneously attributed to Dawood and are not the original Psalms (Az-Zaboor) revealed to him by Allah. The reason for this is the extensive alteration and interpolation of later writers.

(\*5)For example, see Soorah Bani Israeel, 17:55 and Soorah An-Nisaa, 4:163.

(\*6)Traditions are authentic textual material containing clear and explicit sayings of the Prophet. His sayings in this matter only refer to the beautiful, melodious quality of Dawood's voice in reciting from the Book of Psalms. It is true that a number of narrations (aathaar mowqoofah) reported on the authority of some of the taabi'een (the generation after the companions) refer to the wonderful qualities of Dawood's voice in an exxagerated manner, and in some of these a mention of musical

instruments is found. However, such narrations do not stand as valid proof in this issue because they consist of views and/or reports of the type known as *israaaeeeliyaat* (reports gleaned from hearsay or the traditions of the People of Book). The criterion in such matters is to be based upon a reference to Allah's Book and the authentic sunnah. For a sample of such narrations, see Ibn Katheer's voluminous historic compendium, AlBidaayah wan Nihaayah, vol.2, pp. 10-11.

(\*7)See Tafseerul Quraanil Adheem, vol.2, p. 422.

(\*8)Refer to the tafseer (commentary) entitled Roohul Ma'aani, vol. 6, p. 17.

(\*9)See Qurtubi's Al-Jaami'li Ahkaamil Quraan, vol. 6, pp. 16-17.

(\*10)Tafseer Roohul Ma'aani, vol 6, p. 17.

(\*11)For details, see Qurtubi's Al-Jaami'li Ahkaamil Quraan, vol 6, p. 17; Ibn Katheer's Al-Bidaayah wan Nihaayah, vol. 2, pp.10-11 and An-Najjaar's Qassasul Anbiyya, pp. 310-311.

(\*12)Soorah Saad, 38:41-42.

(\*13)Soorah Saad, 38:44.

(\*14)The type of dancing most probably meant is that of the Sufi dervishes and others; for they considered their ecstatic twirling to the accompaniment of certain ritual formulas (*adhkaar*) and musical instruments a form of worship (*ibaadah*) which brings one closer to Allah. Of course, such things are none other than *bid'ah* (blameworthy innovations and misguidance in *deen*).

(\*15)See Qurtubi's Al-Jaami'li Ahkaamil Quraan, vol. 15, p. 215.

(\*16)*Ibid*.

(\*17)Soorah Al-Araaf, 7:160.

(\*18)The beating of the typically hard, stuffed cushions of the Arabic "*majlis*" decor, produces a hollow sound similar to the bass drum. This was a common musical accompanient for singers in Iraq during the early historical eras (circa 1st-2nd century of the Hijrah) See pp. 106-107 of Ibn Hajar Al-Haythami's Kaffur Ra'aa.

(\*19)See Qurtubi's Al-Jaami'li Ahkaamil Quraan, vol. 15, p. 215.

\*20)The codified science containing principles and methods for arriving at a jurisprudential ruling directly from the texts of the Quraan and sunnah, or by a referral to the general principles embodied in such texts or applied to them.

\*21)The law of those who received a divinely-revealed scripture before us, who are designated as the People of the Book (*Ahlul Kitaab*) - the Jews and Christians.

(\*22)For details outlining the various scholars' views regarding the application or abrogation of previously-revealed law, see Zakaria Bardeesi's Usool Fiqh, p. 243-247.

(\*23)53:59-62.

(\*24)For details, see pp. 123-124 of vol.17 of his tafseer.

(\*25)See Al-Jowhari's As-Sihaah, vol. 2, p. 489.

\*26)Al-Jaami'li Ahkaamil Quraan, vol. 17, p. 123.

(\*27)*Ibid*.

(\*28)See Jaami'ul Bayaan'an Taweeli Aayil Quraan, vol. 27, pp. 82-84.

(\*29)See also Qurtubi's tafseer, vol. 17, p. 123.

(\*30)It is interesting to note that other major commentaries of "*ahkaamul Quraan*" (jurisprudential rulings derived from the Quraanic texts) do not even mention this verse as proof for the prohibition of music, etc. For example, see the works of Al-Jassaas, Ibnul-Arabi and Ilkeeya Al-Harraasi.

(\*31)Soorah Al-Israa, 17:64.

(\*32)See Qurtubi's tafseer, vol. 10, p. 289; Ibn Katheer's Tafseerul Quraanil Adheem, vol. 5, p. 91 and At-Tabari's tafseer, vol. 15, p. 118.

(\*33)As reported in the narration of At-Tabari traced to Ibn Abbaas and Qatadah. See his tafseer, vol. 15, p. 118 for details.

(\*34)See At-Tabari's tafseer, vol. 15, p. 118, for details.

(\*35)31:6.

(\*36)Related by Al-Bayhaqi, Ubnu'l-Munhdir and Al-Haakim in his Mustadrak, where he authenticated it; and it was confirmed by Adh-Dhahabi.

(\*37)See At-Tabari's Jaami'ul Bayaan, vol. 21, p. 61 for the various narrations related to Ibn Abbaas.

(\*38)Ibid., vol. 21, p. 62.

(\*39)For details, see the tafseer of Ibn Katheer, vol. 6, p. 334; Al-Qurtubi's Al-Jaami', vol. 14, pp. 51-53 and As-Suyooti's Ad-Durr Al-Manthoor, vol. 5, pp. 158-160.

(\*40)See the commentaries of Ibn Katheer, vol. 6, p. 334 and At-Tabari, vol. 21, p. 63.

(\*41)Roohul Ma'aani, vol. 21, p. 67.

(\*42)Soorah Luqmaan, 31:7.

(\*43)Related by At-Tabari in his tafseer, vol. 21, p. 63. The reference is to Soorah Fussilat, 41:26, whose meaning may be rendered, **{Those who disbelieve say, "Don't listen to this Quraan. Drown out the hearing of it,so that perchance you may overcome."}** There are other interpretations of it, but Ibn Zayd's, as mentioned above, is the most obvious. See Al-Qurtubi's tafseer, vol. 15, p. 356, for details.

(\*44)That is, every form of communication.

(\*45)Quoted from p. 63, vol. 21, of his Jaami'ul Bayaan'an Taweeli Aayil Quraan.

(\*46)The wearing of silk is lawful for females but has been forbidden for men.

(\*47)See Fathul Baari, vol. 10, p. 51.

(\*48)Isnaad or sanad is the chain of narrators of prophetic traditions. In this case, it's from Imaam Al-Bukhaari traced back to the Prophet. The narrator's reliability in reporting, as well as other considerations connected with the science of verification and assessment of the degree of prophetic traditions, fall under these terms.

(\*49)According to Ibn Hajar's statement in Fathul Baari, vol. 10, p. 52, Ibn Hazm claimed that there is a break between Al-Bukhaari and the narrator, Sadaqah bin Khaalid. Whatever the case, both claims will be shown to be unfounded.

(\*50)For details, refer to vol. 10, p. 52 of the Salafi edition, Cairo.

(\*51)This is the short title of Al-Bukhaari's collection, and it means, "The Authentic Compilation." It is most deserving of this title as it is the most authentic book after the Quraan.

(\*52)See Fathul Baari, vol. 5, pp. 17-22, for details.

(\*53)Such as Al-Bukhaari's history, At-Taareekh Al-Kabeer, Ibn Hibbaan's Mawaarid Adh-Dhamaan and At-Tabaraani's Al-Mu'jam Al-Kabeer.

(\*54)i.e whether the companion's name (rather his kunyah, signifying the appellation, "father of so and so") was Abu Maalik or Abu 'Aamir.

(\*55)That is from both of the companions, Abu Maalik and Abu 'Aamir. Thus, the question regarding the difference of the name is no longer an issue.

(\*56)Taghleequt Ta'leeq, vol. 5, p. 22.

(\*57)This book has been translated into English by various publishers under the title "The Lawful and the Prohibited in Islam (Al-Hilal Wal Haram Fil Islam)" by Yusuf Al-Qaradwi.

(\*58)The terminology "fuqahaa of hadeeth" used by Al-Qardaawi appears to reveal his unfamiliarity with proper designation of the various types of scholars of Islam according to their particular branch of Islamic science. Fuqahaa is a term applied to jurists who study the legal issues derived from the shari'ah and who arrive at rulings in regard to them. Nowhere, to my knowledge, has the term fuqahaaul hadeeth been used in hadeeth criticism. The specialists in the area of criticism, verification and assessment of hadeeth literature are termed ashaabul hadeeth (those who relate and

apply the hadeeth) or nuqqaadul hadeeth (critical assessors of hadeeth) or merely al-muhaddithoon (narrators of hadeeth). It appears that Al-Qardaawi depends on the views of "general" scholars, the likes of Al-Ghazaali, Ibnul-Arabi and Ibn Hazm rather than on the qualified specialists in the noble hadeeth sciences such as Al-Bukhaari, Muslim, Ahmad, Ibn Ma'een, Abu Dawood, Abu Zura'h, Ibn Abi Haatim, Ibnus-Salaah, Al-Iraaqi, Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn Hajar. These and their likes are authorities. But Al-Qardaawi has not quoted these or any of their calibre, even though there is a consensus among such qualified authorities that authentic hadeeths prohibiting music and its variants do exist, as shall be seen further on in this paper.

(\*59) See p.293 of his Al-Halaal wal Haraam fil Islam. Such bold, all-encompassing statements (if correctly attributed to Ibn Hazm and Ibnul-Arabi) are unfortunate examples of overstepping the boundaries of the scholars' domain. Not even the most accomplished specialists in the field of hadeeth criticism would dare to make such blank statements such as, "Every hadeeth relating to prohibition of music is false." or "There is no authentic hadeeth prohibiting music," etc. because they don't know every hadeeth which exists nor the degree of every hadeeth which exists!! Had these scholars confined their views somewhat by saying something like, "As far as I know, there are no authentic hadeeths..." etc. that would have been closer to the truth, would have protected their honor and would not have left them open to blame and censure. But as it is said, "Every prize courser is prone to a fall", all are prone to error except the true, chosen Messengers of Allah (may He exalt them and grant them peace).

(\*60) This was due to his stubborn insistence on applying only the meaning of the shari'ah texts (i.e. the literal wording of the Quraan and traditions). This attitude often led him to have peculiar, even ridiculous views regarding certain jurisprudential issues. See his work, Al-Muhalla for details.

(\*61) Page 401 of his biographical work, Mukhtasar Tabaqaati Ulamaail Hadeeth.

(\*62) The monumental Arabic dictionary, vol. 9, pp. 244-245.

(\*63) In this form ('azf), it is an exception to the general principle of derivation by analogy. See Lisaanul Arab, vol. 9, p. 244.

(\*64) In this form dufoof is plural of daff or duff, a small hand drum which is like the tambourine except that it doesn't have the steel objects which rattle. It consists of a narrow wooden rim. Around one side of it, a thin animal hide is bound tightly. Sound is evinced by tapping it with the fingertips or palm of the hand.

(\*65) As-Sihaah, vol. 4, p. 1402.

(\*66) Taaajul 'Aroos min Jawaahirul Qaamoos, vol. 6, p. 197.

(\*67) A dictionary in which terms of the prophetic traditions appear.

(\*68) See vol. 3, p. 230 of An-Nihaayah.

(\*69) i.e. Fat-hul Baari, vol.10, p. 55.

(\*70) When singing has musical accompaniment it takes on the description of 'azf or mi'zaf, i.e. musical entertainment.

(\*71) Music, instruments and singing to musical accompaniment.

(\*72) See vol. 2, p. 385 of the edition edited by Muhammad Mustafa Al-Adhami.

(\*73) See 'Ownul Ma'bood, vol. 13, p. 271.

(\*74) Vol. 1, hadeeth no. 90, pp. 136-139.

(\*75) Vol. 5-6, p. 105, hadeeth no. 5530.

(\*76) Page 228, hadeeth no. 402.

(\*77) See Ahmad's Musnad, vol. 1, pp. 289 and 350, vol. 2, pp. 158 and 171-172.

(\*78) See Ahmad's Musnad, vol. 2, pp. 165 and 167.

(\*79) The Arabian guitar, termed qinneen in the text of the hadeeth.

(\*80) Witr refers to a voluntary prayer performed during the night after 'Eeshaa (the night prayer). It consists of an odd number of units (raka'at) from one to nine.

(\*81) Vol. 1-2, p. 106, hadeeth no. 1743 and 1744.



(\*82)Vol. 2, p. 1276, hadeeth no. 4503.

(\*83)Vol. 4, pp. 283-285, hadeeth no. 1708 and p. 422, hadeeth no. 1806.

(\*84)Entitled Al-Mustadrak 'alas Saheehayn; the hadeeth appears on p. 40 of vol. 4.

(\*85)For the details regarding the critical analysis and evaluation of this and related asaaneed, see Al-Albaani's Silsilatul Ahadeeth As-Saheehah, vol. 1, hadeeth no. 428 and Al-Bagawi's Sharhus Sunnah, vol. 5, p. 431.

(\*86)Manuscript no. 2/22/1, as related by the scholars of hadeeth, Naasiruddeen Al-Albaani in his Al-Ahaadeeth As-Saheehah, vol. 1, p. 170 of the 5th section.

(\*87)A type of flute.

(\*88)Its isnaad is authentic.

(\*89)Al-Musnad.

(\*90)Vol. 3, page 13.

(\*91)For other authentic traditions which will establish the ruling of prohibition, see the valuable treatise, entitled Ahadeeth Dhammil Ghinaa wal Maazif fil Meezan, pp. 35, 47, 50 and 53 (Kuwait, Maktabah Daarul Aqsaa, 1986).

(\*92)Soorah Qaaf, 50:37.